

Early Days



EARLY DAYS

Forty years of the Old Town's
early history, particularly dedi-
cated to the "Boys of 59"

GEORGE WINEGAR
JAKE BROWNLIE
FRANK HAGGERTY

Illustrations by: Gene Davis

and

Mary Bathe

Map by:

George Manyik

FOREWORD

After my father's death in 1938 these papers were found in his desk. They were not written for publication, but to be read and discussed at the annual dinners of the "Old Timers," since all four were familiar with the incidents mentioned in the papers. These men were born in Vallejo between the years of 1857 to 1859, they attended Mullin's School in their youth and were the last survivors of that seat of learning. They celebrated their birthdays together—up to 1839—with dinners and much conversation, mainly about the past and of the quartet only one survives, namely Jack Brownlie, familiarly known as "Jake."

This little amount of "Early Days" has not a great deal of literary merit nor is it of particular interest to anyone coming to Vallejo during the past few years, but it is an accurate picture of the town itself in the '40s, '50s and also from information he derived from his father and his father's friends—members of the old Hook and Ladder Co. So since there are still in Vallejo some descendants of the original settlers they will, no doubt, derive some pleasure in reading of the social activities of their ancestors.

Since no mention is made of the pioneer

women I think it is only befitting to give them some of the credit due to those who blazed the trail for the Pioneers of 1942. The one who was closest to me was my grandmother, Theresa Browne, who leaving Boston as a bride of eighteen, sailing to the Isthmus of Panama, crossing it on the back of a mule (and incidentally falling off and breaking her arm)—then after the long, tiresome wait on the Pacific side for a sailing vessel to bring the party north, arrived in Vallejo in 1858. Shortly after her arrival my father, her eldest child, was born.

She was the stuff of which pioneers are made—always cheerful, never complaining and the term "good neighbor" could be applied without reservation. She was typical of the type of women who came west at that period—leaving security for the discomforts of the frontier life, enduring inadequate housing, no plumbing, the pioneer fathers and—Vallejo mud. So if these pages ever come to the attention of our newest citizens, I hope they will bring them to the realization that the small group of men and women who were our first settlers endured more hardships than a shortage of gasoline.

June, 1943,
Vallejo, California

THE SOSCOL GRANT

Mexican Government
to
Mariano G. Vallejo

Grand June 10, 1844
Consideration, \$50,000
Recorded, Feb. 18, 1848
Book A, Page 493

The party of the second part having solicited from the government the purchase of the land known by the name of "Soscol," bounded on the north by the lands called "Tucolay and Suisun," on the east and south by the Straits of Suisun, Carquinez and Napa Creek, now by virtue of the powers invested in me, I declare him to be owner of said land to occupy and possess the same exclusively.
Monterey, June 17, 1844.

(Seal) Manuel Micheltorena,
Governor.

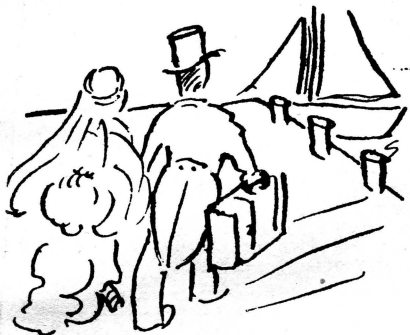
The Soscol Grant—upon part of which

the town of Vallejo now stands comprised about 80,000 acres. The general unit of measurement for the Spanish Grants was in "Leagues of Land," that is, square leagues and to our modern system of descriptive delineation of lands would be vague and uncertain in its definite metes and bounds from established land marks. Measurements were taken by the person applying for the grant from the "top of the highest elevation as far as the eye could reach, north, south, east and west, until a range of hills or mountains intervened or the waters of a navigable waterway.

THE EARLY 40's EDEN — The First Settler

In the year 1844, while California was still under the control of the Mexican government, the population of the south section of the Socol Grant—where the City of Vallejo is now situated—consisted of a few fishermen and wild game hunters seeking a living off the shores. No water traffic went by and over the country roamed thousands of wild cattle and horses, the property of General Vallejo.

Meanwhile one Ole Johnson had left his native land (Sweden) in a windjammer bound for the northern waters of the Pacific for a load of whale oil and bone. The ship, on reaching Acapulco, made port for supplies and fresh water and Ole, during his stay there, met the daughter of the port consul of his native country. She, tiring of the place and from its influences romantically inclined, married Ole, leaving with him on the wind jammer for the north. The



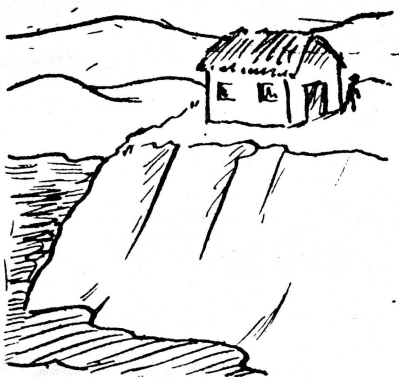
ship finally dropped anchor in San Francisco Bay and forthwith Ole and the bride "jumped ship," the influences of a new land appealing to them. They camped on the Oakland shore and Ole proceeded to build a sloop in order to explore the waterways further north and do a little trading on the side. The bride, like all good Swedish girls, was trained to work and was not only a valued assistant to Ole in the construction of the boat, but when it was launched served as his crew.

Launching the boat and bending sails Ole and his bride, with a load of cord wood, sailed from the Oakland shore up San Pablo Bay, destined for the banks of the Sacramento River. Wind and tide favored him, but the boat, being newly built and improperly caulked, began to take water. With the bride bailing and Ole at the tiller, the wind increasing and the water gaining, the boat reached the mouth of the present Vallejo Bay. Ole had to "come about ship" and make for the calmer waters, so he sailed for the beach line directly ahead and grounded ship on the

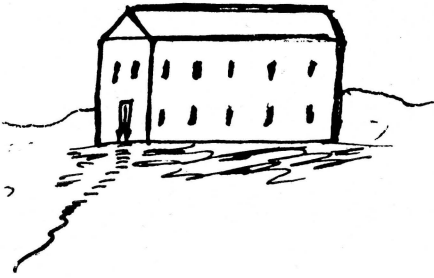
sandy bottom of the shore where Vallejo now stands.



Fortunately for Ole it was high tide so his boat, by this time water-logged, was run up to safe bottom, and he and the bride were glad to reach land. Ebb tide left the boat high and dry so Ole walked ashore, over the sandy stretch, to view the location. It was spring and the land was green and luscious, (the summer trade winds were in the future), and Ole, overjoyed in reaching safety and viewing the landscape, exclaimed, "This is Eden, and here I stay;" so he proceeded to dismantle the boat and carried shoreward all personal effects, making a tent from the sails. Their wants were few—the bay abounded in fish, there were mussels on the shore line and wild berries in the meadows. Meat was obtained by roping one of General Vallejo's steers, so Ole and the bride settled down contentedly. With winter approaching he built a tule-thatched cabin on the bluff above the beach from the lumber of his boat and from then on the term "Eden" was applied to that particular section of the grant—until it was officially named Vallejo in 1851.



THE STATE CAPITOL



On January 5, 1851, the second session of the State Legislature met in San Jose—a session noted for angry controversy, but the most exciting and bitter was the question of the removal of the State Capitol. This was favored on account of the inaccessibility of the place, the bad roads leading to it—making a journey slow and inconvenient, and the town being small lacked accommodations for the legislators.

General Vallejo, a member, made the most generous proposition. He promised the state 156 acres of land on his Soscol grant, the erection of a state capitol building, including state offices, an asylum, a penitentiary to be located on the high point of land at the entrance to the bay and besides all that, the sum of \$570,000.00. The legislators, having no money in the state treasury, received the proposal with general and loud acclaim and the site selected was where Vallejo now stands, its northern line of demarcation being the present south line of Georgia Street, extending from the water front to the present easterly city limits and south to the banks of the bay. The legislature, honoring General Vallejo, named the proposed state capitol site "Vallejo"—changing it from "Eden" township.

General Vallejo immediately made arrangements for the erection and building of the state capitol as the first unit. It was a plainly constructed building, owing to the fact that saw mills were lacking in the state and all lumber had to be shipped from Honolulu—the plan calling for a two-story frame building with a basement, about 65 feet in depth and 45 feet in width. It stood on a commanding elevation on the crown of the hill about 150 feet from the westerly line of Sacramento Street and 25 feet from the south line of York, which at that time extended westerly to the edge of the bay—the present Santa Clara Street being uncut. The nearest buildings were on Georgia Street, as yet undeveloped and unimproved as a business street. The outside of the building was given several coats of yellow wash which produced an

"organeade" effect and when the legislature first met the interior was not completed, having improvised seats of planks and boxes.

Meeting in January, in a season that was afternoon known as "a hard and heavy winter" and the place as yet being only an undeveloped hamlet, the main body of senators arriving on a small stern wheeler called the "Empire" found no accommodations for lodgings and very few for board.



Since there were no street improvements they had to plough through, what for many years afterward brought anathema to it from visitor or temporary resident—Vallejo mud. Fortunately high top boots were the fashion which permitted them to "wade in." From lack of accommodations they had to live on the steamer, without adequate bedding or bathing facilities and since the senators, at that time, were representative citizens, they dressed according to the standards of the day—highly polished linen shirt fronts, top-sail collars and extended cuffs, so they found themselves in a small community, deprived of benefits of laundries—not even Chinese—and the few thrifty housewives charged \$5.00 to launder a shirt. After enduring all this for thirteen days the session was adjourned and met in Sacramento on January 16, continuing in session there till some months following.

This was a blow to General Vallejo's ambition to found and make an "empire city" of the place and it also was the means of shattering the first real estate "boom" in the state. Vallejo, as yet, was the legal seat of government, though part of its state archives and offices were in San Jose and part in Sacramento, but its legal status being established the next session, convening in January, 1853, was called to meet here. General Vallejo, meanwhile having improved and finished the interior of the building opened the ses-

sion on New Year's with a grand ball at which all the military and civil officials of the state were present—including the "first families" of the town. The legislature met and continued its session for forty days, but the General realized that his desire to hold and keep permanent the state capitol at Vallejo was doomed, so on adjournment a resolution was passed for the 1854 session to meet in Benicia.

Although the town had been given the dignity of a name it was an uninhabited cattle range over which roamed almost countless herds of wild cattle—the property of General Vallejo. They provided his main source of income as, after the annual rodeo the cattle were rounded up and killed, the hides and tallow were shipped to San Francisco. Maine Street at that time was merely a roadway and on the south side near the bay was a tumble-down building which houses a small store conducted by one Ole Johnson whose chief claim to fame was the fact that he was the first yachtsman to sail the course from San Francisco

to Vallejo. He sold the bare necessities of life and also the main essential of the land at that period—bad whiskey—to the *vacqueros* caring for and herding the cattle, a few squatters and some fishermen and hunters. A small settlement of roughly built huts along the block, over the hill, were the crude habitations of these people—and across the water lay Mare Island.

MARIANO G. VALLEJO

to
JOHN B. FRISBIE

Deed December 9, 1854, consideration \$25,000.00, does grant that certain tract or parcel of land known as the "Town of Vallejo," embracing one square of land, subject only to such grants or conveniences as may have been made by the party of the first part, prior to the 10th day of December, 1853.

(Seal)—MARIANO G. VALLEJO.

Recorded: Book of Deeds, page 160, December 21, 1854, Solano County Records.

THE '50's



The little village, through given a temporary stimulation by the State capitol episode had in 1852 only about forty qualified electors and its total population did not exceed 100 persons until the selection and acquiring by the Government, of Mare Island as a navy yard. The contract for a sectional drydock was given to a New York firm which, when built, was shipped accompanied by a group of ship carpenters to assemble and place in position upon arrival. Among them were Elias Shillingsburg, Alex Brownlie's father; Sam Rule and many others who were given temporary quarters on Mare Island. With the arrival of Captain Farragut on the sloop "Warren" and no provision for housing accommodations made for the officers, all civilians quartered on the Yard had to leave and take lodgings on the Vallejo side of the bay upon the completion of the

drydock, as also Farragut who later resided in a dwelling still standing on the second block of Maine Street.

A number of the mechanics employed on the dock then brought their families here and erected the first substantial homes on the same block and in its vicinity—Maine Street being then the principal roadway, for the town location was one of rolling hills to the water's edge and no defined streets. Mare Island extended from the Magazine Point on the south to the old foundry point on the north, a distance of about two miles. Where what is now Submarine Base was a small slough which the government used as a "boneyard" for the condemned boats of the navy—cutters, gigs, whale boats, etc. When in later years piles were driven for constructing the base, an obstruction was met which proved to be an old navy cutter, which established the fact that boats were well built at that period.

With the development of Mare Island came the growth of the town during the decade of the '50s and in 1851 a permanent town government was established with a town board, a justice of the peace, a constable and a city marshal. "Squire" Hook, who also carried the sobriquet of "Major", was the first justice of the peace. He was a typical "down-east" American, claiming lineage in direct line from Squire Hook who was governor of the Connecticut-Rhode Island Farm Colony in 1641. Governor Edgar was the town marshal and Jim Lee the portentous constable.

Although wood was scarce, high in price and finished lumber difficult to get, build-

ing improvements began at this time on Maine Street, which appeared to be the main street of the town. In 1854, Captain Weed, a retired sea captain, built a large two-story hotel on the first block called the "United States" and conducted it for a number of years until his murder one night as he returned from the business section. (This always remained one of the unsolved mysteries of the town). At the time Captain Weed erected the hotel he also built, from the foot of the street, a substantial wharf, replacing the old shipping landing of early days.

At that time also there stood on stilt supports on the edge of the bank Ole Johnson's dilapidated cabin of the '40s that formerly served as the business center of Eden. It was the one hostelry and general store in the hamlet, catering to the limited wants of the few inhabitants and was known as the "Union House"—always a somewhat tilted citizen on the porch facing a pile of baled hay on the bank, flanked by a bundle of hides waiting shipment to San Francisco by some stray packet.

Finally the Union House met an ignominious end by falling into the bay and for the following years the new wharf was known as "Weed's Wharf" until it was acquired by the Monticello Steamship Company.

Next to be built was the first brick building in town, a two-story dwelling on the north side of the first block, erected by Captain Warner and later the home of P. T. Walsh, whose daughter, Mrs. Mary Turner, now resides on Mare Island. At this period a bight of bay waters on the south side of the block ran into Santa Clara Street, making a fine, sandy beach—later it was bulkheaded and filled in and was the site of the Aden Lumber Company.

The first residence to be erected in the second block was built in 1854 by W. Shillingsburg and was large enough to house not only his own family, but others also. In the block beyond was born the first native of Vallejo—Alex Brownlie—brother of Mrs. Annie Rowland and Jake Brownlie, while below on the corner was the Central Hotel, later turned into a blacksmith and carriage shop bearing the sign "Bish, op, Hughes and King," and nearby was the town jail while to the east was grazing land.

At this time on account of the scarcity of lumber in the state, a shipment of corrugated iron was sent around the Horn sufficient to erect fourteen iron structures for residential purposes. Some stood for many years in different parts of the city and the last one was on the lot on the northeast corner of Maine and Marin.

We will now step back and view the block on Santa Clara Street connecting Maine and Georgia. Passing along the roadway facing north—on the right, oppo-

site the site of the capitol building, is the small frame dwelling where the writer of this "old time brochure" was born, across the road was the residence and shop of John Dawson, "Merchant Tailor," while on the corner below stood the grocery store of Dan Williamson. Opposite that was a



building, the rendezvous for the politicians, intelligentsia and men-about-town who indulged, in the evening, in long and heated arguments about national and local events of interest—the grocery store of P. B. Lynch.

On the left, near the water, was the residence of the Ashe family, later, after leaving Vallejo, well-known in San Francisco, and next to that the home of Captain Barbour with its majestic locust trees in front. Further down on the beach line lived the Widow Wright with her two sons, one an invalid and the other — Pete — for many years a loyal and faithful member of the Vallejo fire department. On the next block traveling north, was Ned Fitsmaurice's butcher shop, Donnelly's Bakery and Mrs. Quinlin's boarding house—she, owning a



famous goat that she expatriated for eating the Hymn books in the Methodist Church—"filling himself with Protestant prayers."

But one of the oldest historical relics still standing in the middle of the first block of Georgia Street is the old Washington Hall. When built it was on the corner of Georgia and Santa Clara Streets—the upper floor being used, from the late '50s to



1868, as a town hall and also for social functions—known elegantly as “soirees.” Following the completion of the city hall in 1876 it was reconstructed and used for residential purposes by Henry Connolly, the owner and the old-time business man and pioneer. He also owned the Georgia Street side which was destroyed by fire in 1901. (Alarm 1 a. m.—Full department out—raining—street mud one foot deep—Josh Emerson at steam throttle—Billy Wise, stoker—six streams on the fire. All the stock in “Bill-eye” Sweeney’s saloon next door saved and the department saved the lot.) Below on the block was Lynch’s boarding house and the Philadelphia Hotel, conducted by the Nugent family. Across the street Bill Greve’s grocery, then that of the “Indefatigable” Derwin, both flanking the Union Hotel—first owner, James McCudden, then the Casserly family and last Tom Brownley, the grandfather of our townsman, W. D. Tormey.

At this period the bay waters came up to the east line of Santa Clara Street and the houses on Georgia Street were on stilt foundations, so Santa Clara was graded between Georgia and Maine and the dirt used to fill up the lots on the former street.

With the development of the town the anticipated advancement of Maine Street as a business center failed to be permanent, for in the late ‘50s the building of a wharf, with a small boat landing, from the foot of Georgia Street and the establishment of a row boat ferry for the accommodation of navy yard workmen made the lower block a business center—later principally for saloons.

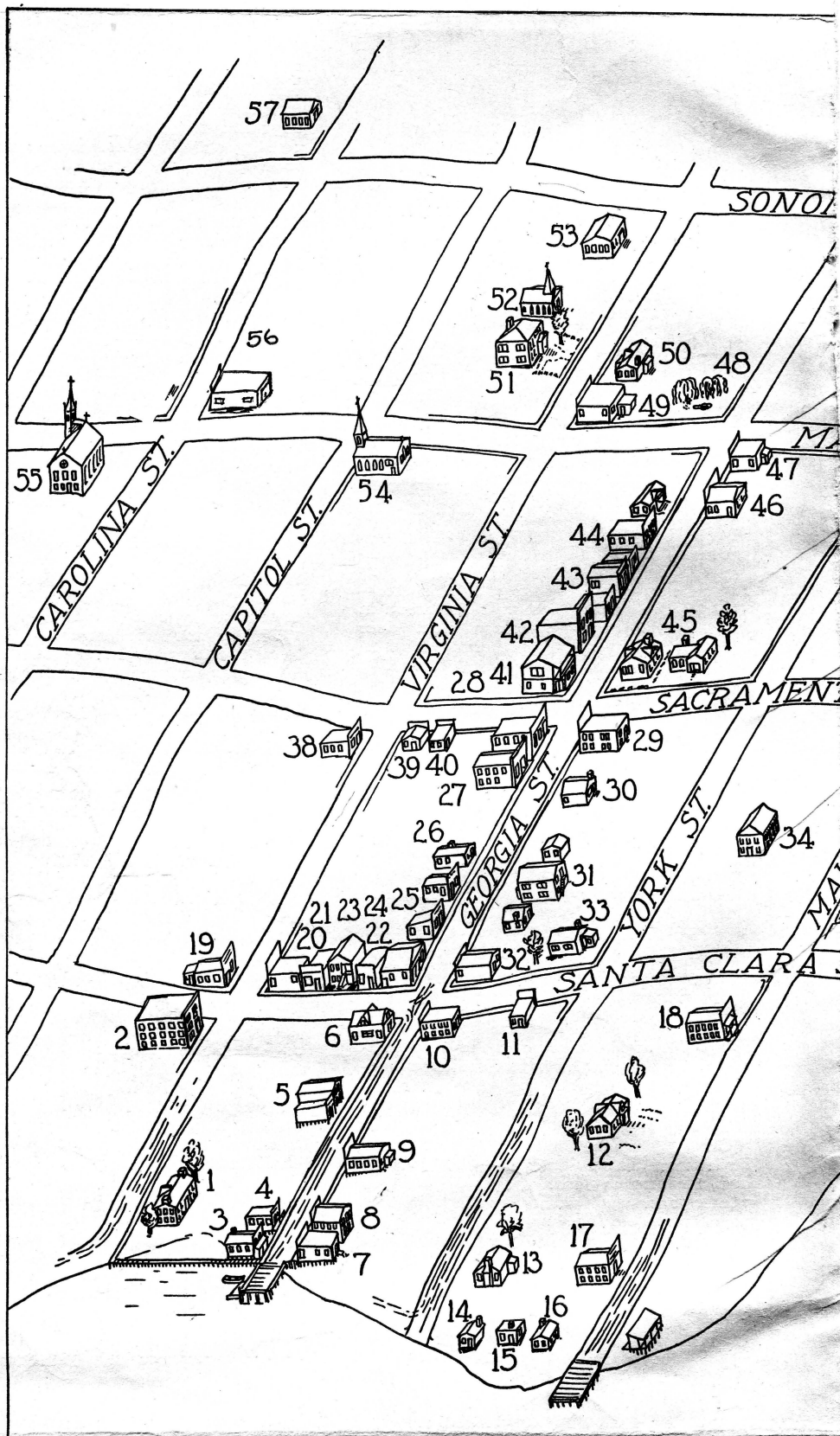
Climbing up the steep grade of Georgia Street from Santa Clara, as yet ungraded and unimproved—hub deep with mud in winter and dust laden in summer—we come to the original housing of the Vallejo Hook and Ladder Co. No. 1 opposite the present Howard House. The street was interspersed with one and one and a half story frame structures with vacant lots between. On one side of the street were “Waxy” Beresford’s cobbler shop and further on one owned by Dave Jankins, then

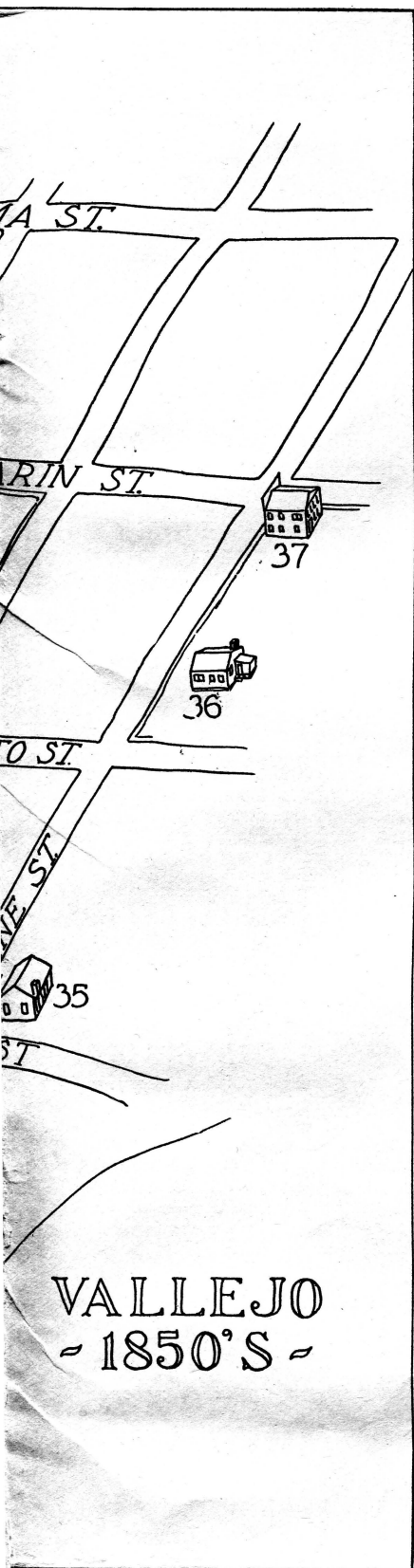
J. J. Massey’s white and clean residence and watch repairing business and above that McElroy’s stationary store (the building still stands—the present proprietor conducting the same line of business). Next to it, on the corner was the postoffice with Eleazer Frisbie as first postmaster.

On the opposite side of the square stood Louie Lowden’s grocery, in later years a saloon run by Cris Buckley, who after leaving Vallejo opened one on Bush Street in San Francisco and became known as the “Blind Boss” of that city. When in Vallejo his sight was not impaired and he received his first experience in politics here. Next, below was a small frame dwelling where Patrick Haggerty resided and where his eldest son, Frank, was born in 1857, and among the intervening small houses were Nolan’s butcher shop and the two-story home of Patrick Murphy—for forty-nine years bell-ringer on Mare Island, the workman’s call to and from work. On one occasion he was “laid off,” to use a local expression, through a change in administration—(no civil service in those days, when the Democrats were in the Republicans were out, and vice versa), and his solacing remark was, “the navy yard is an uncertain place to work.”

On the southeast corner of the square stood two large houses surrounded by gardens, one occupied by General Frisbie and his family and the other by a member of the Vallejo family. When the street was graded in 1868, making a sixteen foot bank at the corner, a brick wall was erected and in 1872 both houses were moved back to York Street and the present Bernard Hotel was built—named for General Frisbie’s son. Looking north along Sacramento Street was a row of wooden buildings which houses Lam’s Hardware Store and Madam Martin’s Home of Ease, Tom Gannon’s lodging house and, where the Public Library now stands, Teddy O’Neill’s grocery—with a box of dried codfish always by the door.

As we look up Georgia Street to the third block on the north side stood the Elk Horn saloon, run for years by Judge C. W. Riley, justice of the peace, who had his Temple of Justice in a room off the barroom—gin and justice hand in hand, served while you wait. A recently published sketch of the Judge states that he lost an eye and an arm in the Indian wars. The fact remains that at the time of his advent here, while he was still a young man, there was not an Indian indulging in warfare within five hundred miles, but on one occasion while he was hunting wild ducks in the marshes north of town he inadvertently stuck the barrel of his gun in the mud, choking the muzzle. Immediately after discharging it at a rising flock of ducks the gun blew up, causing the loss of an eye and an arm. In sympathy the townspeople elected him justice of the peace





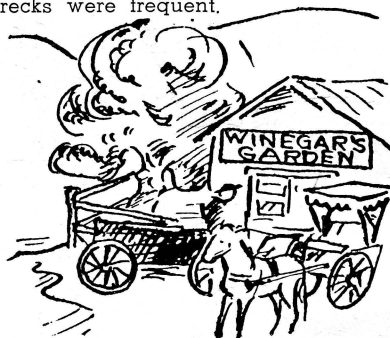
1. Captain Maguire's home
2. Metropolitan Hotel
3. Philadelphia Hotel
4. Lynch's Boarding house
5. Washington Hotel
6. Washington Hall
7. Greve's Grocery
8. Union Hotel
9. Derwin's
10. P. B. Lynch's Grocery
11. Dawson's
12. Ashe Residence
13. Captain Barbour's Home
14. Coakley's
15. Wright's
16. Brophy's
17. United States Hotel
18. Walsh Home
19. Aspenwall's
20. Bergwall's
21. Donnelly's Bakery
22. Fitzmaurice's Butcher Shop
23. Mrs. Quinlan's Boarding House
24. Hook and Ladder Co.
25. Cobbler Shop
26. Massey's
27. McElroy's
28. Postoffice
29. Lowden's Grocery
30. Haggerty's Home
31. Patrick Murphy, the Bell Ringer
32. Williamson's
33. Where the writer was born
34. Capitol building
35. Shillingsburg Residence
36. Brownlie Residence
37. Central Hotel
38. O'Neil's Grocery
39. Gannon's
40. Lamb's Hardware
41. Elkhorn Saloon
42. McCarty Building
43. Mrs. Colby's Shop
44. Topley's Drug Store
45. Frisbie and Vallejo Residences
46. Rainbow Restaurant
47. Furstenfeld's Butcher Shop
48. Pool and Willow tree
49. Hildreth Blacksmith Shop
50. Callender Residence
51. Powell Residence
52. Methodist Church
53. Mullins School
54. Catholic Church
55. Presbyterian Church
56. Brewery
57. First Public School

and he held the job for thirty years. Next was the Colby, afterward called the McCarty Building, its lumber cut in Maine and brought around the Horn in 1855, when the building was erected. A few years ago it was condemned and torn down and the lumber was found to be in a perfect state of preservation. Further on was Mrs. Colby's little "nick-nack" shop, then Topley's drug store next to the frame cottage occupied by Greeley Hilborn, its front room utilized by him as a law office.

Across the street, where the Streichen House now stands, was the Rainbow Restaurant run by a German named John Brown—his slogan at dinner time being "you gets pie, you gets no beer, you gets beer you gets no pie." The business was later owned by Charles Winegar, father of George who made a success of it by giving both pie and beer.

He later went to the country where Cypress knoll is now located and opened a very popular restaurant known as "Winegar's Gardens" and later "Retreat Cottage." In the rear was ample space for baseball and when the "Vallejo's" and the "Dashaways" got together the variagated colors in the caps and uniforms made a picturesque scene.

The cottage was set in from the road with ample space to accommodate numbers of buggies along its fence rail, so it was a red letter day when there was a big funeral at the cemetery beyond for an returning the two mile stretch intervening called for a race as far as Winegars—wrecks were frequent.



On the corner of Marin and Georgia stood Martin Furstenfeld's butcher shop, later owned by old Francis Shirland, diagonally across the square was a pool of water, fed by a spring and surrounded by willow trees. Later, on this location was a fruit and vegetable stand run by Harry Soanes, brother of Joe (who drove what was known in the vernacular as a "hack"—full load always at a funeral). Harry's clerk, Ossie McCullough, had an impediment in his speech so when he said to a customer "Today we have deen drapes and dray wabbits," only the initiated could understand.

Down the block, on the corner of Marin

and Virginia Streets was the blacksmith shop of Charles Hildredth, father to George—our city assessor. Next to that was the home of John Callender, a prominent Pioneer and one-time sheriff, and across the street a pretentious home, surrounded by a beautiful garden, was occupied by Abraham Powell, the agent for the Pudget Sound Lumber Company. On the property adjoining stood the Methodist Church, erected in 1855 by volunteer workers from the navy yard, on a lot donated by General Frisbie and on the corner above was Mullins school, a private school for boys.

Looking down Virginia Street toward the bay on the square intersected by Santa Clara Street there still stands a three-story brick building originally known as the Metropolitan Hotel, then the Sherman House and finally the Astor House. It was built by Charles Rand, first conducted by John Lee and then Dan Harrier, father of Judge Harrier. On opposite corners were the grocery store and small fraternal hall of W. J. Aspenwall and the drygoods store of Gustav Bergwall, while on the south side of the block below is a house that has lost the dignity it deserves—being used as an Italian restaurant.

It was the residence of Captain John Maguire and was built originally in Maine, brought around the Horn on a sailing vessel and put up in Benicia. After a business and real estate collapse in that city, owing to the removal of the Pacific Mail Company's repair plant, the building was placed on a raft and moved intact to Vallejo in 1855. At the time Captain Maguire and his family occupied it as a residence the time came up to Virginia and Branciforet Streets, so he built a six foot wide plank foot bridge over the bay waters, connecting Virginia and Georgia, which the public used for many years until the waterfront was reclaimed.

Up to the time of his death Captain Maguire was prominently identified with the Vallejo-Mare Island Ferry Company which succeeded the row boat ferry conducted by John Ward. This first steamer was named "The Lizzie," after his eldest daughter, Mrs. James Nevins, who was the first American child born in Benicia.

An outstanding event, to the townspeople at this time was the visit of a Japanese ship, sent to this country in order that about one hundred high class youths of Japan could observe Western civilization—Japan ports having recently been opened through the influence of Commodore Perry. They came ashore daily, garbed in their native costume—barelegged, with sandals and broad straw hats. Ambling along the streets, never using the sidewalks and gazing at every one shyly and furtively. They attracted much attention, but were unable to converse with the townspeople, so what they thought of Vallejo remains unknown.

THE OLD INDEPENDENCE



Later in the year 1854 the USS Independence, a two-deck frigate originally built in 1814, was refitted at New York as a station flagship for the Pacific Coast. She was stationed at San Francisco for two years, then sailed to Mare Island. Meeting a strong north wind at the mouth of the bay she made three tacks to her mooring berth at the north end of the navy yard near the old foundry and later was moved to a berthing space south of the present government drydocks, where she remained as Receiving Ship until sold for junk in 1914.

Almost from the incipency of the town and for fifty-six years afterward the old ship was closely identified with its social and mercantile life, for those who had been attached as officers and enlisted men had intercourse with the town people. She was a product of the days when hard tack, scouse and "dandy-funk," with occasional porpoise steaks, made men of the sea—when every man aboard knew his ropes and every officer was a sailor. Officers, distinguished in naval careers, had trod her decks and many old service men had come "over her side" with clothes bag and kit after years of service. There are still those who remember the resonant bark of her old six pounder at six in the morning in winter and five in summer, so on that fateful day in 1914 when, as the result of the act of an ungrateful Congress, she was towed away a number of retired service

men as well as residents of the city gathered on the Vallejo side opposite the scene. As she commenced to move under the tow of the tug boat, one said—"There she goes, without her flag." Just one hundred years from the old ship's launching to her sale, she floated downstream—a picturesque emblem of past glory.

In this sophisticated age sentiment is something to relegate to the past—so the fact that one of the retired members of the crew of the Independence played Nearer My God to Thee on his bugle as the ship disappeared from view brings amused grins to the faces of this generation when that fact is mentioned, but although the navy men of that era were what is now considered "hard boiled," still they generally had a streak of sentimentality since the care that was taken of the Spanish captain's grave proves that. Prior to the naming of Mare Island it was known as "Senor Island", possibly in respect to the memory of a Spanish captain who, following the Canazares expedition, sought to explore the vicinity further. He was taken ill as his ship was anchored in the bay, died and was buried on the banks of the island where the Independence was afterward moored and his grave, located at the head of the gangway leading to the ship, was cared for by the crew until after the removal of the ship and coal bins were erected on the spot where he still rests.



HOOK AND LADDER COMPANY, No. 1, V. F. D.

After the removal of the legislature from Vallejo the old capitol building remained, a monument to the forlorn optimism of General Vallejo in making Vallejo the capitol city of the state. It stood on the hill top until 1859—used by farmers from the surrounding country as a storage place for hay, the basement having been sub-

divided into small apartments for living quarters. In June of that year the upper part being filled with hay, a fire started in one of the lower apartments. Quickly spreading the building was totally destroyed so the few residents of the little town realizing their helplessness in case of fire, formed the nucleus of a fire depart-

ment. Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 was organized July 1, 1859, and continued as an active company for 57 years until supplanted by a paid department in 1912. The first roster follows:

Foreman—Philip Hichborn (at the time employed on Mare Island Navy Yard, later appointed naval instructor U. S. N. and at the time of his death, chief naval instructor U. S. N.); W. J. Aspenwall, B. Benas, G. Berkwall, H. Bliven, Chas. Barr, J. Beresford, Thomas Browne, W. Brown, W. Brownlie, A. Clark, H. Canty, T. Cusick, J. Doyle, R. Davis, J. Frisbie, A. Guffy, W. Greeves, A. Gorham, D. Hayes, J. Harvey, P. Haggerty, G. Lucy, P. Lynch, W. and J. Likens, B. Lee, J. Murphy, P. Murphy, R. Morris, H. Mc-

Cullough, V. McClatchy, P. McElroy, W. McDonald, J. McCudden, J. McErnery, J. Newbert, J. Phillips, J. Rodgers, I. Rutan, S. Rule, W. Shillingsburg D. Springer, W. Shields, J. Shay, J. Tobin, T. Thornton, J. Williams, C. Winegar, J. Wise, J. Williston.

The company treasurer for many years was Barny Benas, diminutive in stature but long in honesty and always elected to take care of the company's funds. It's truck was built by John King, who ran a blacksmith shop at Maine and Marin Streets, and so substantially was it done that the truck saw active service from 1859 to 1912 when the volunteer company was disbanded.

THE 60's

For a period of at least ten years, from 1853 onward, land holding in the state involved uncertainty, unrest and frequent conflict so the Soscol Rancho lands were not exempt from it—Squatter Trouble. It was caused by the great mass of people migrating into the state following the gold rush and being misinformed and obsessed with the idea that all the Old Spanish and Mexican grants, as held before ceding the territory to the United States, reverted to the government and could be taken by simply locating or settling on the section desired. In consequence, hundreds of settlers or "squatters" erected their shacks over the Soscol Rancho. Illustrating this was the tragedy of Elias Viera who had purchased land on the Sulphur Springs road two miles east of Vallejo.

Viera, a peaceful, law-abiding man, had erected a house for his family and had developed his holdings for agricultural purposes. One morning he found a squatter building a temporary shack on his property. Viera told him to vacate, which he refused to do—saying he intended to hold it anyway. About a week following they met again, both armed, and the controversy was renewed. A fight followed and the squatter was killed. Viera, coming to town, promptly gave himself up to the authorities and was placed under arrest. Rumor followed that the squatters from the adjoining lands had met and swore vengeance, so there being no secure jail in town, the prisoner was removed to the care of naval authorities on Mare Island for safety where he was detained three days. The naval authorities then notified the local sheriff that they could hold him no longer since there was no Federal charge against him.

On the day of his return thirty horsemen, six or seven masked, rode down Georgia Street to the residence of E. J. Wilson on the corner of Georgia and Sacramento Streets where the Vallejo Commercial Bank now stands. They halted in

front of the building, the leaders dismounted and proceeded upstairs—finding Viera in a room where he had been hidden. Without compunction they immediately riddled him with bullets, killing him instantly. Returning to their mounts they discharged a volley from their guns and rode away. Subsequently seventeen of the ringleaders were arrested. Demanding separate trials the first was acquitted on the grounds that "the facts as encompassing the act as charged as murder did not constitute a crime." The prosecution being indifferent to the matter had the case against them dismissed and later some became moral, social and political lights of the community. (Names deleted.)

The result—

THE UNITED STATES

to

JOHN B. FRISBIE

Patent—April 9, 1867.

Recorded—Jan. 15, 1868.

Pursuant to the Act of Congress approved March 3, 1868—An Act to grant the right of pre-emption to certain purchasers on the Soscol Rancho, full payment has been made by John B. Frisbie for the fractional section No. 13 in Township 3, NR W.M.D.M. Now the United States grants the land as above described.

By the President,
ANDREW JOHNSON

On account of the dissension involving "Squatter's Rights" on the Soscol Grant, General Frisbie, son-in-law of General Vallejo, made a quiet trip to Washington in 1867 and being a person of commanding personality and much influence succeeded in having, by an act of Congress, the quietus put on the too frequent frauds practiced by designing persons "squattaring" on the lands of others and afterwards claiming them. This clarified the situation and gradually the "Squatter Trouble," as

it was called, was eliminated. It was the first political touch, of what is now the city of Vallejo, with Washington.

During this time the town was enclosed by a rail fence, marking the town limits, along Sonoma street to Kentucky and then running east and west. The center of so-



cial activities was "Eureka Hall," a frame building on the corner of Sacramento and

York streets, built by Abe Gorham the local "Dramatic Agent" and leader of the only string orchestra. The first event given in it was the Fireman's Ball in 1862, under the auspices of Hook and Ladder Co., No. 1. Tickets admitting lady and gentleman—\$5.00. Twenty-four dances and five extras—supper at midnight and dancing till 5 in the morning. All tickets sold.

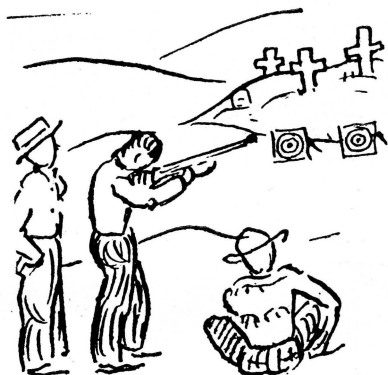
Next on the list was the visit of the Russian Fleet under command of Admiral Popoff. It was during the period of the Civil War and the Russian government sent one group of vessels to this coast and another to the Atlantic as a friendly gesture of assistance in case of complications arising from another power offering help to the Southern cause.

They came at a most opportune moment for the ladies of St. Vincent's parish were holding their first church fair. The gallant Russians attended en masse and generously donated silks, curios and other articles they had brought from the Orient. The sum of \$20,000.00 was realized—a great amount for those days.

THE 60's

Here and there in different quarters of the city may be found structures, relics of the past. In the first block of Tennessee street some cottages are still standing, built at this period by workers who rowed daily to and from Mare Island, beaching their boats on the sandy beach running close to North Beach Gardens (a favorite resort for families on Sundays)—the locality being known as the "Brickyard" on account of a brick kiln erected on the flat immediately north of it, where the bricks used in the construction of the Metropolitan Hotel, now the Astor House, were made.

The flat was also used by the local militia company, the Vallejo Rifles, as a target range but beyond was the first cemetery and the bullets missing the target—frequently—would become impinged



in the wooden head markers. This was considered a bulls-eye and adjournment was then made to the Gardens. When the cemeteries were established on the Benicia Road the few buried in this locality were removed.

During the last World War the U. S. Building Corporation, having selected this site for housing improvements, set a day for dedication purposes. A bandstand was erected and a deep hole dug for the flag pole when there was brought up on the end of a shovel the thigh bone and several ribs of a human—also a brick.

The conclusion was reached that they were the bones of an early day Indian but the evidence of the brick in the hole with the remains carried a doubt, since it was more likely an early day pioneer, it never being an historical fact that an Indian fell in conflict by being hit over the head with a brick—but others of more pugnacious ancestry had so fallen. The bones and the brick were carefully assembled and sent to the authorities at the Mare Island naval hospital for a proper diagnosis and report thereon—pending the coroner's inquest with fee and burial.

The bones, brick and report having been sent to Washington and retained—the local coroner lost his honest returns.

They having been removed from the earth with a government pick and shovel, local civil jurisdiction was lost until government inquiry had concluded its labors. There is still hope of them showing up some day—the Naval Board of Inquiry not being finished yet. This is mentioned

to show that at any time in digging in the soil within the present city limits historical relics of the early days may unexpectedly be found.



In 1864 there was a flood in Napa—long to be remembered and discussed for the bay was filled with flotsam—fence-rails, boards, chicken coops, etc., brought down by the flood waters and many of the thrifty settlers salvaged the lumber and used it for building purposes. This little settlement was far removed from the limits of the small town, all the area between it and the north line of Kentucky street was a vast wheat field and from an opening in the fence back of the present Catholic church a foot path ran through the field down to the residence of James Doyle on Tennessee street. James Doyle, who built the first marble and stone yard in the community and whose son now conducts the business.

Also over Georgia street hill was another foot path, used on Sunday afternoons for a jaunt out to Winegars Gardens or a social call on the Rule family, who lived nearby. The street served as a main avenue to and from town for buggy or farm wagon and Pat McCrea's stage to Benicia. Leaving in the morning—returning the same evening to make connections with the Sacramento boats to San Francisco.

During the years of the Civil War, although far removed from the seat of conquest, opinions were divided—still the town was predominately loyal to the Union. But in the northern part of the county were a number of Confederate sympathizers and rumors grew alarmingly that they were organizing with the intent to raid and destroy the Navy Yard.

For protection to the Yard and repelling the invaders the men employed were organized and armed, drilling in companies with the old time muskets and bayonets. In the beginning they were naturally awkward and to the order, "Dress front—fix bayonets," on company formation many a patriotic novice was speared in the ear

or through the cheek—wounded in the line of duty—by the bayonet carried by the man next in line. The father of the writer carried to his grave a speared port ear as thus inflicted on him in drill.

Following the Pension Act in 1866 a number of these veterans of the Battle of Mare Island made application for pensions, "for disability in line of service." An ungrateful government rejected the applications on the grounds—"The Department feels and so rules such employees of the Navy Yard have been fully compensated in the wages they drew for the jobs they held and work performed on them."

The town was officially surveyed in 1868 by Elder Rowe, a competent civil engineer, assisted by another surveyor, Bill Cockburn. Rowe was a dignified Englishman, well educated, and kept bachelor hall with Bill in a cottage on Maine street. It was his custom to meet nightly with various citizens in P. B. Lynch's grocery store at Georgia and Santa Clara streets, to discuss politics and other affairs of interest. At times the arguments waxed loud and heated, particularly when the Gaels and English got together.

On the corner of Marin and Capitol, on a lot donated by General Frisbie, stood the first Catholic church in Vallejo. In 1866 an addition was built for school purposes and maintained until the removal of the old church to Florida street, bell and all, in 1868. The parochial school was presided over by a Miss Maguire, an elderly spinster. As we proceed north to Carolina on a hill top stood the first Presbyterian church, also on a lot donated by General Frisbie and across the street was Jim McGarcy's brewery—the first one in town—but General Frisbie did not donate the lot—he sold it for a price—reasonably.

When Elder Rowe made his official survey of the town he placed the survey line in the middle of this square, directly in line with the North star—at the end of the Dipper. An appropriate action since water was scarce, it being sold in barrels to consumers, so on a warm day whenever



er-by with the greeting "Help yourself." Such old customs have long since been discarded—those who observed them being dead.

The first school in Vallejo was a private one taught by Mrs. Drake in 1851—next, the first public school, a three room structure on the same lot where the Lincoln school now stands, was built in 1859 and in 1866 the first parochial school was established. But the best known and the one that lived longest in the memories of those who attended it, namely George Winegar, Jack Brownlie, Frank Haggerty and John A. Brown—classmates during their terms there—was Professor William Patrick Mullins School for Boys.

lated too much dirt on the hands and alas for the boy who had them in his possession. Cleanliness as well as the three R's were an obsession with him and the daily hour for writing lessons received sedulous attention on his part. He would walk up and down the class room, the rod of discipline always in his hand, and covered the work of every pupil with an eagle eye. (He had only one.) Any evidence of a blot merited a resounding whack and those who survived have not forgotten their early lessons in legible penmanship.

Weekly spelling "bees" were a procedure and the boy who spelled the word correctly, as he took his place ahead, had to take the ruler and give the hand of the pupil who missed a crack—the force varying as to his friendship, but if he struck some chum too lightly the master would take notice and immediately give him an active illustration of how to punish.

A method of punishment which has fallen into disuse and which he used in extreme cases was the mounting of a boy on the back of a larger and older pupil who would grasp the culprit around the thighs and then, in order to save himself from falling, the victim would be compelled to grab his "horse" around the neck, thus tightening his pants across a vulnerable spot and so he was soundly thrashed.

He was an active exponent of the policy "get your man" for on one occasion a victim, while being punished, broke loose and dashed from the class room with Professor Mullins close after him. In the alley running down Virginia street some householders had pigpens—no sanitary inspectors then and patios and outdoor fireplaces were unknown—so the culprit realizing he would soon be caught, dove in but the school master, nothing daunted, followed and emerged from two feet of slush holding the unfortunate by the scruff of the neck.

Although to modern ideas this discipline was crude, it was also effective and the pupils who went through that Spartan training felt the benefits in after life.



School hours from 9 to 4. There was no bell, the opening signal was the master coming to the front door and sticking out his hand. On entering, everyone was lined up hands out—inspection by master with rule in hand. If there was evidence of grime—crack with ruler, out to wash basin by back door and on returning for inspection another crack was given as a reminder not to repeat the offense. No bare-foot boys were allowed and if shoes were not polished—out to the back door again where there was shoe blacking and brush, then on returning another crack, at no time gently given. He had a violent antipathy to marbles because they accumu-

During the 60's and into the 70's a close neighborly spirit prevailed among the people, young and old, and help was offered immediately on hearing of sickness or distress. Sundays were the days of ease and social intercourse, the days of "boots out"

since that wearing apparel, always being made to order, was a source of pride to the owner and—weather permitting—the day was one of social calls.

The men also gathered on the street corners discussing politics and other matters of interest—every man with sporting proclivities owning a bulldog which would walk closely to his master's heels. As the owner stopped to greet their fellow citizens and conversation followed and lengthened, so also dog greeted dog.

Suddenly a growl and a snarl and the bull dogs were entangled in a good dog fight which was quickly the absorbing interest of the crowd—politics and social amenities forgotten. The battle was on till some excited onlooker kicked one of the combatants on which the owner, under the law "kick my dog, kick me," followed with a flying fist to the miscreant's jaw.

THE 70's

The youth of the town, the first native sons, were growing up and developing an independent fighting spirit—banded together in different sections under various elegant names typifying the location. In this they emulated the custom of their predecessors, the Spanish discoverers—but the titles bestowed were not as picturesque or euphonious, namely, Mosquito Town, Sturgeon Row, Glass Alley, The Brickyard and others. They fought among themselves but if any outsider obtruded there was an harmonious coordination of action and all joined together to meet the foe.

Occasionally a marine or sailor ashore "on liberty" being unaware of this unique local custom would wander into the line of fire during a sectional combat and be met with a barrage of rocks. On returning to ship and reporting the incident much indignation would result and an irate captain would send word ashore that the "repetition of such an act would call for drastic action, if necessary he would sweep

From then on it was a good free fight—all the dogs and men entering into the spirit of the fray. Toward the end, when all were nearly exhausted, Town Marshal George Edgar or his constable, Tom Johnson, hastily bearing down the street to preserve the peace, intervened. Hats were recovered, the dogs leashed and all hands adjourned to the nearest saloon. Half a dozen of such social diversions on a Sunday afternoon made the day pass pleasantly and with interest. Good old days—never to return.

But for those who cared for more cultured pursuits the first library was in the frame building where the Seevil now stands. Besides literature, crib and checkers were the popular form of amusement and the library was maintained, from the time of its organization in 1862, for twenty-five years by private support.

the street by opening fire with his main battery." That would end hostilities for awhile.

Every boy in town knew how to swim for sandy beaches stretched along the water front. A favorite pastime for the older ones was to swim out to the ships anchored in mid-stream and then back to the shore. Sulkies and farm wagons were left in shore waters to tighten up wheels and at the foot of Capitol street converts to the Baptist church were immersed in baptismal rites. Bath tubs were scarce so the bay was also a factor in keeping the younger generation clean.

With the advent of the California-Pacific Railroad making South Vallejo its terminal there was plenty of employment on Mare Island and an era of prosperity enhanced the value of town lots. In the business section the first substantial brick buildings were erected—The City Hall, Barnard Hotel, Farragut Hall, San Pablo I. O. O. F. hall and Farragut Building. The town also boasted of two crack militia companies.

The Vallejo Rifles, organized in 1862 and originally uniformed in the regular army uniform of the day but later adopting a blue swallow-tail coat, military pants to match with white stripe and high, black bearskin shako. Jim Barbour was captain and later Frank O'Grady.

The Frisbie Guards, not to be outdone, garbed themselves in white swallow-tail coats, red pants and white bearskin shakos. It all formed a riot of color on Fourth of July celebrations when the two companies, led by Shillingsburg's band playing its popular march music, ("Number 9—black book"), marched at the head of the parade followed by the Fire Department—its apparatus handsomely decor-



ated with flowers and bunting, on each piece of equipment a local belle proudly enthroned and decked out in a fireman's hat and red shirt while the firemen of Hook and Ladder Co., No. 1, San Pablo Engine Co., Frisbie Engine Co., Neptune Hose Co., and Phoenix Engine Co., of South Vallejo marched along as escorts.

In 1873 the first class graduated from the High School, with appropriate exercises. The members were Mary Long, Maggie Tobin, Mary McKnight, Hattie Dempsey, and the following year the first convent school graduates made their bow—two young ladies named Miss Tormey and Miss Driscoll. They afterward entered the Dominican Order of Sisters and were known as Sister Ursula and Sister Ignatius respectively. In 1874 the ones promoted to the Junior class in the public High School were:

John Brownlie, John Browne, Geo. Campbell, W. Coleman, Tom Dempsey, John Frisbie, Geo. Edgar, Elon Mitchell, Tom Robinson, Lucy Radke, Nelly Wright, Mary Rowe, Lizzie Elfers, Mary Sundquist, Jennie Wynne, Sarah Reese, Clara Chipchase, Maggie Olinger.

These were the days of the social clubs, the Occidental, the Ivy, the Silver Leaf, the Bachelor and the Bohemian—the days of the "Elite Soirees" and the buggy rides. Practically the same names appear on the

rosters of the clubs, though the Bachelor had the longest existence—disbanding in 1884 with a flourish—namely a supper and dancing party at the White Sulphur Springs. All the livery stables in town were emptied since every young blade was anxious to make an appearance with a tightly reined, highly stepping horse.

THE BACHELOR—Geo. Roe, J. Weill, W. Tobin, J. Aspenwall, Matt Denio, T. Gilbert, H. Massey, Chas. Devlin, Horace Osgood, John A. Browne, Harry Edgar, Geo. Guffy.

THE BOHEMIAN—A. Brownlie, F. Lemon, O. Hilton, E. Nelson, W. Tobin, John Browne, Fred Hall, H. Lazelle, Geo. Roe, D. McLean, C. Dexter, W. Pennycook, Mark Patton.

These were the days when ladies did not drink in public, when the best tailor made suit was carefully pressed for any "soiree" or ball—when every dance had a floor committee and a male guest appearing with even a suspicion of being "under the influence of liquor" was quietly escorted from the floor. If a quick run was made between dances to a nearby saloon for a drink, a saucer of cloves or peppermints was always on the counter for the thirsty one to "partake of freely" in order to smother the odor of liquor. Good old days—also gone forever.

THE DIARY OF A YOUNG MAN ABOUT TOWN

1884—January 1

The year is ushered in with singing the old year out and drinking the new year in. A lovely night and a large crowd of the boys made a bonfire. I wend my way homeward at 2. Start the year by commencing to make calls at 1:30 in a wine colored suit and hat.

First—at Bond's, a huge sherry—Jennings, sherry and cigars—Powers, (Alice and Annie Walters assisting), sherry—Rose Drake's and Jessie Pennycook's, lemonade—Sharp's, lemonade—Dunbar's, conversation—O'Brien's, claret—Mrs. Rhodes, assisted in receiving by the Misses Frey, lemonade—The Misses Daly, sherry—McCudden's, sherry and at 8 o'clock arrive at Mrs. Sheridan's where the Misses Power, Barry and Aspenwall are receiving. Spent the evening till 10, then homeward.

Jan. 2—Attend the A. O. V. H. Ball—dance till 3:30.

Jan. 3—Attend the theatre—The Two Orphans—Very good.

Jan. 4—Meeting of Bachelors—Oysters and singing.

Jan. 5—Attend social at George's—buffet supper—A most enjoyable time.

Jan. 6—Heard a lecture on Ireland—Am reading Les Miserables.

Jan. 7—Attend an "Elite Soiree"—Plenty of dancing and Hop waltzing—Met Miss Rhorer of South Vallejo—Charmed.

Jan. 8—After a year's absence call on J.—The ice is broken—I remain for dinner and spend the evening—I always prepare for unforeseen emergencies—I make my will.

Jan. 9—I am very tired.



THE END

